

	Type	L #	Hits	Search Text	DBs	Time Stamp
1	BRS	L1	3291	(mock or simulated) near5 environment	US- PGPUB; USPAT; USOCR; EPO; JPO; DERWE NT; IBM_TD B	2005/12/29 13:57
2	BRS	L2	8625	like near5 real	US- PGPUB; USPAT; USOCR; EPO; JPO; DERWE NT; IBM_TD B	2005/12/29 14:28
3	BRS	L4	487865	decorat\$6 or furnish\$6	US- PGPUB; USPAT; USOCR; EPO; JPO; DERWE NT; IBM_TD B	2005/12/29 13:58

	Type	L #	Hits	Search Text	DBs	Time Stamp
4	BRS	L5	10	13 and 14	US- PGPUB; USPAT; USOCR; EPO; JPO; DERWE NT; IBM_TD B	2005/12/29 14:25
5	BRS	L6	1377	laboratory near5 home	US- PGPUB; USPAT; USOCR; EPO; JPO; DERWE NT; IBM_TD B	2005/12/29 14:28
6	BRS	L7	5	12 and 16	US- PGPUB; USPAT; USOCR; EPO; JPO; DERWE NT; IBM_TD B	2005/12/29 14:25

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7	BRS	L8	1377	laboratory near5 home	US- PGPUB; USPAT; USOCR; EPO; JPO; DERWE NT; IBM_TD B	2005/12/29 14:28
8	BRS	L9	16169	like near15 real	US- PGPUB; USPAT; USOCR; EPO; JPO; DERWE NT; IBM_TD B	2005/12/29 14:28
9	BRS	L10	21	18 and 19	US- PGPUB; USPAT; USOCR; EPO; JPO; DERWE NT; IBM_TD B	2005/12/29 14:30

	Type	L #	Hits	Search Text	DBs	Time Stamp
10	BRS	L11	1273	research near10 consumer	US- PGPUB; USPAT; USOCR; EPO; JPO; DERWE NT; IBM_TD B	2005/12/29 14:30
11	BRS	L12	7	11 and 111	US- PGPUB; USPAT; USOCR; EPO; JPO; DERWE NT; IBM_TD B	2005/12/29 14:30
12	BRS	L3	159	11 and 12	US- PGPUB; USPAT; USOCR; EPO; JPO; DERWE NT; IBM_TD B	2005/12/29 14:34

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One-stop training.

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Byline: Don Patterson, Correspondent

Tarrant County College's Northwest Campus in Fort Worth, Texas, underwent a transformation that marks it as a leader in firefighting education. The TCC Fire Service Training Center serves a variety of needs offering firefighter certifications and associate of applied science degrees in fire investigation and fire protection technologies. It also provides the continuing education training necessary for in-service personnel to maintain firefighting certification as well as complete advanced certification programs. The academy serves the needs of municipal and volunteer fire departments and is certified as a training facility by the Texas Commission on Fire Protection.

Although the campus has offered fire training for many years, its new facility is destined to be one of the most innovative in the country. The training complex, described by its designers and developers as state-of-the art, offers agencies throughout the state, including more than 4,000 firefighters in Tarrant County, the opportunity to train using advanced technology for firefighting and rescue. FSTC also will offer numerous programs and conferences of national interest. The center features a computer-controlled, live-burn disaster city replicating common elements of communities including landscaped residential streets, homes, businesses, an apartment/hotel complex, a warehouse and high-rise buildings. It also contains a one-of-a-kind controlled swiftwater rescue area, and a trench-rescue/confined-space simulation area.

Planning and design

Planning has been ongoing since early 2000, and construction was completed last September. Carl Pringle, TCC director of facilities planning, describes the design's evolution. "I don't believe there's another facility like it in Texas," Pringle says. "We've designed and developed an \$18-\$20 million, 23-acre facility that combines a remarkably realistic drill field affording multiple training scenarios.

"The adjacent administrative building includes classroom facilities, an arson/fire science laboratory, lecture halls, a student center and a three-story observation tower from which we can initiate, observe and control all events on the drill field. Our existing fire academy will be incorporated into the new facility."

Pringle, who has served as facilities planning director for two years but has worked in TCC construction projects for 15 years, can't hide his enthusiasm about the project.

"We've made it look **like** a **real** town," he says. "It mimics the **environment** that firefighters work in. We've **simulated** five different burn facilities including single-family, 1- and 2-story residences; a 6-story, high-rise office building; an apartment complex; strip shopping center; and office warehouse complex.

"The most exciting element is our swiftwater rescue facility. We've excavated several ponds that will be used for water recycling and as a source for the swiftwater tributary. Massive pumps will regulate the flow from a trickle to a torrent, allowing students to engage in numerous water rescue techniques. We can simulate a flood environment, rapid water, submerged cars and victim excavation via rope from shoreline, in-water or by an extended ladder."

According to Pringle, the complex doesn't hedge on realism: "The simulated town is complete with streets, cul de sacs, parking lots, and all the landscaping and details you would find in a real community.

"We even have a railroad crossing gate and a tanker railroad car turned over as in a real accident," Pringle says. "Adjacent to the overturned tanker, we've constructed a large simulated spill fire area with 40-to 50-foot flames."

Sept. 11 impact

The mass tragedy of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks has placed a growing nationwide emphasis on improving firefighting and rescue techniques. The new TCC Fire Service Training Center has likewise been given more emphasis in the shadow of that tragic event. Ted Phillips, TCC division chair of the public safety institute explains the effect of the Sept. 11 catastrophe on the project.

"This facility was conceived well before the Sept. 11 tragedy," Phillips says. "Our intent, in the very initial stages, was to make it a facility to address multi-agency responses. We wanted it to be a true rescue-oriented facility, so we had our eye on training for mass-casualty events.

"Since Sept. 11, obviously the interest has significantly increased. Yet the need for firefighters to receive continuing education has always been there. Our direction may have changed somewhat since Sept. 11 as far as the content of their training. We recently attended, for example, a counter-terrorism course in New York City. One of the reasons why we attended was to identify some areas that we could use as a foundation of training here and to identify some people who could teach that type of material.

"We really didn't change our mission because of Sept. 11 but did receive some reinforcement to reach our objectives, specifically training in emergency management and mass casualty," Phillips says.

Local benefits

Phillips is excited about the new facility's contribution to the county, its communities and the region.

"The center will be a tremendous asset to the fire service in this community and throughout the state," he says. "I think it will give potential and in-service firefighters opportunities for training that they have never had."

Tommy Abercrombie, TCC Fire Service Training Center coordinator, is equally optimistic about the project's value. Abercrombie is both a product of and contributor to the TCC Fire Technology program. He earned his certificate and applied science degree at the college, then began an 11-year firefighting career beginning with the Haltom City (Texas) Fire Department. He later moved to the Fort Worth (Texas) Fire Department where he is currently a lieutenant. Abercrombie returned to the northwest campus early in his career to teach and now oversees the fire service training program including its current expansion.

He has played a leading role in the program's development and is proud of what it has become. "We are most pleased with the facility's unique design," Abercrombie says. "The drill field, hands-on training buildings, a mock fire station, and the close integration with administrative and classroom facilities all contribute to a focused environment for learning."

"Our concept was to create a small city that would duplicate much of what we find in this area - multiple burn buildings including residential, housing additions, commercial, industrial and more," he says. "We wanted, overall, to marry the hands-on activities with the classroom environment in such a way that the student would have little difficulty adjusting from one to the other."

The administration and classroom facility overlooks the entire site from a third-floor, glass-encased control tower. The safety officer staff residing there can impose special challenges, such as turning water off at a particular hydrant so that a firefighter faces an unplanned difficulty and must find another water source. The safety staff can control the severity of each burn or rescue scenario including streetlights, building power and pump flow. They also can monitor each exercise and measure student response with computerized printouts that identify how long it takes to extinguish a fire and how much water is used. From these records they can establish a documented success failure rate that can show the student how he or she fared while showing the faculty the effectiveness of the training.

"Student proximity to hands-on training is key," Abercrombie says. "The drill field can also be observed from windowed classrooms and a student lounge. We can even display drill field activities on video playback stations located throughout the facility. The student is therefore never far from the action."

Environmental harmony

Abercrombie also is proud of the environmental-friendly status of the entire facility. Every drill field element, from the residential buildings, hotel-apartment complex, strip shopping center, 4- and 6-story high rise, to the warehouse with its 18-wheeler backed up to a loading dock, are all burnable via propane or natural gas fed with computerized controls. They are quickly and efficiently made reusable with no impact on the environment.

"We use filtered recycled training water, natural gas and propane to deliver a very clean site," Abercrombie says. "Our swiftwater rescue facility came about through the building of those recycling ponds. We took advantage of them to build what looks like a creek flowing through the complex. It can simulate everything from a gentle stream to a raging river."

"That site is ground-breaking. To our knowledge there are not a lot of places in the country that have this controlled environment. Other sites use a natural waterway, spillway, etc. where there is limited control. Ours is totally safe. We can quickly shut the water off and drain the site completely. Likewise, all our burn scenario fireplaces are controlled by

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